



National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and
Associated Disorders

P.O. Box 7 * Highland Park, Illinois 60035
(847) 831-3438 * Office E-mail: anad20@aol.com

before the

**United States House of Representatives Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Resources,
Education and Related Agencies**

Testimony of

Ron George, father of the late Leslie George

On behalf of

**National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders
(ANAD)**

March 30, 2006 at 2:00 P.M.



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Summary of Testimony

Eating disorders are at epidemic levels in America. It is estimated that seven million women and one million men suffer from eating disorders -- all segments of society, young and old, rich and poor, all ethnic groups including African American, Latino, Asian and Native American.

Eating disorders cause tremendous suffering for victims and families, a significant loss to society and are expensive to treat. Anorexia nervosa has the highest mortality rate of any mental illness. Six percent of those who have the disease die. **However, these very dangerous illnesses can be cured and prevented.**

Data from a 2005 ANAD study shows that eating disorders are almost prevalent as alcohol or drug problems among middle and high school female students. The study also shows that far less time is spent on eating disorders prevention than on alcohol or drug prevention programs. Seventeen percent of schools surveyed spent one hour per year on eating disorders education; 11% did not have any program at all.

With eating disorders as prevalent as alcohol and drug problems, it is imperative that we significantly expand and implement programs at the middle and high school levels to prevent Anorexia Nervosa and related illnesses.

Millions of our youth can benefit from proven, low cost services that assist students to understand and avoid the dangers of eating disorders. They also promote the four elements of a healthy lifestyle: self-acceptance, a good diet, adequate exercise and sufficient sleep. These programs now exist and are readily available.

We urge Congress to allocate \$2,000,000.00 or \$50.00 per school to place these life enhancing programs in every middle and high school in the United States.

Second, given the importance of medical research in advancing our understanding of eating disorders and how to effectively treat and prevent them, ANAD respectfully requests that the Subcommittee appropriate an additional \$77.1 million in funds, above and beyond the \$1.395 billion the Administration has requested, for the National Institute for Mental Health



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**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
MARCH 30, 2006, 2:00 P.M.
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES AND EDUCATION**

Founded in 1976, the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders (ANAD) is our nation's oldest non-profit organization dedicated to education, early detection, and prevention of anorexia nervosa, bulimia, and related eating disorders.

Eating disorders are severe mental illnesses which often have significant physical health consequences for their victims, including malnutrition, obesity, and diabetes, as well as death due to cardiac arrest, organ failure, blood imbalances, and suicide. Indeed, anorexia nervosa has the highest mortality rate of any mental illness. Six percent of those who have the disease die as a result. These disorders also frequently lead to or co-occur with other serious illnesses such as severe depression, alcoholism, and drug abuse.

Eating disorders are at epidemic levels in America. It is estimated that seven million women and one million men have eating disorders. They affect all segments of society—the young and old, the rich and poor, and all races and ethnicities, including African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino and Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans. But this is an epidemic that can be averted with education and prevention programs, and cured with early diagnosis and appropriate treatment.

Data from a 2005 ANAD survey of 18 middle and high schools in 15 states indicates that eating disorders are almost as prevalent as alcohol or drug problems among female middle school and high school students. The survey also indicates that our schools are spending far less time on eating disorder prevention than on alcohol or drug prevention programs. Seventeen percent of the schools surveyed spent one hour per year on eating disorder education. Eleven percent of the schools surveyed had no eating disorder prevention program of any kind.

This lack of eating disorder education and prevention in schools is especially troubling in light of the fact that eating disorders often are accompanied by or lead to alcoholism or drug addiction, as well as diabetes, severe depression, and suicidal ideation.

Tens of millions of dollars are spent each year at the local, state, and federal levels to ensure that our children are properly educated to the dangers of alcohol and drugs. The value of such programs has been proven and accepted in schools throughout the

country. With eating disorders almost as prevalent as alcohol and drug abuse in our schools, it is imperative that we provide more support for eating disorder prevention efforts in our middle schools and high schools. Millions of our youth can benefit from proven, low-cost educational and preventive measures that help students to understand and avoid the dangers of eating disorders.

Just as important as education and prevention is eating disorder research into the underlying causes and risk factors associated with eating disorders. As we continue to learn more about underlying causes, risk factors and predictors through medical research, it will undoubtedly improve the efficacy of our education and prevention efforts.

For example, there is a growing body of research supporting the theory that genetic make-up, in addition to psychosocial factors, contribute to a person's vulnerability to eating disorders. An international study reported in the March, 2002, issue of the *American Journal of Human Genetics* identified a region on chromosome 1 that may contain genes that make an individual more vulnerable to developing anorexia nervosa. More recently, a report published in the March, 2006, *Archives of General Psychiatry* concluded that genetic factors account for 56 percent of the risk of developing anorexia nervosa.

Based on the foregoing, ANAD respectfully makes two requests of the Subcommittee with regard to funding priorities for Fiscal Year 2007. Millions of our youth can benefit from proven, low cost services that assist students to understand and avoid the dangers of eating disorders. They also promote the four elements of a healthy lifestyle: self-acceptance, a good diet, adequate exercise and sufficient sleep. These programs now exist and are readily available

First, given the troubling lack of education and prevention in our schools, ANAD respectfully requests \$2,000,000.00 or \$50.00 per school be allocated to place these life enhancing programs in every middle and high school in the United States. This \$2 million in funds is above and beyond the \$217 million requested in the Administration's proposed budget, for the Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools programs to provide grants for eating disorder prevention and education programs in our nation's middle schools and high schools.

Second, given the importance of medical research in advancing our understanding of eating disorders and how to effectively treat and prevent them, ANAD respectfully requests that the Subcommittee appropriate an additional \$77.1 million in funds, above and beyond the \$1.395 billion the Administration has requested, for the National Institute for Mental Health.

Eating disorders cause serious physical problems that can last a lifetime. They rob people of their ability to function as productive members of society because, if not properly treated, victims of these illnesses find themselves requiring more and more costly medical services throughout their lives. With early education and detection, eating disorders are treatable and at a much lower cost to society—both monetary and otherwise.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide the Committee with this *Statement for the Record* and corresponding appropriations requests.

For more information, please contact ANAD's Washington Representative, Jeffrey H. Lewis, Esq., at 202-263-3367 or jhlewis@mayerbrownrowe.com.

Summary of ANAD Eating Disorders Study

Data from a 2005 ANAD study not yet released shows that eating disorders are almost as prevalent as alcohol or drug problems in middle and high school female students. The study also shows that far less time is spent on eating disorder prevention than on alcohol or drug prevention programs.

This is especially significant since eating disorders are often accompanied by or lead on to severe depression, suicidal tendencies, self mutilation or diabetes. Many victims become alcohol or drug addicted.

Eating disorders cause great suffering for victims and families, loss to society and are expensive to treat. Anorexia nervosa has the highest mortality rate of any mental illness. Six percent of all anorexics die from an eating disorder or from complications from their disorder. However, these very dangerous illnesses can be cured and prevented.

Eight middle schools and ten high schools from 15 states were surveyed for this study.

Incidence of Alcoholism, Drugs and Eating Disorders in Schools:

9.8% of girls have problems with alcohol

8% of girls have problems with drugs

7.8% of girls have problems with eating disorders

Time Devoted to Education/Prevention

Time devoted to Alcohol Education/Prevention.....	12.3%
Time devoted to Drugs Education/Prevention.....	13.8%
Time devoted to Eating Disorders Education/Prevention.....	6.2%

Three schools reported one hour per year was spent on eating disorders education and two schools reported that they did not have any program.

Ronald P. George

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Professional Background

MinutemanPress

Arlington, VA

President

Own and operate printing business supplying high-quality printing and duplications services to local businesses, non-profit organizations and government.

March 2003 to Present

eContributor.com

Washington, DC

Senior Vice President, Sales and Marketing

- Internet-based fund-raising

August 2000 to March 2001

SAP America

Atlanta, GA

Global Account Executive

- Sales of Enterprise Resource Planning and complementary software products

January 1998 to August 2000

DLB Systems

Liberty Corner, NJ

Vice President, Business Development

- Sold Oracle-based clinical R&D software

August 1994 to December 1997

Oxford Molecular, Inc.

Springfield, VA

Executive Vice President

- Managed the US operations

July 1993 to August 1994

BBN Software Products

Arlington, VA

Pharmaceutical Industry Manager

- Managed sales of software products for data analysis and clinical research

July 1990 to July 1993

Senior Sales Executive

- Sold software products for data analysis and clinical data management

November 1985 to June 1990

AZTECH Corporation

Washington, DC

Sales Executive

- Computer service bureau and in-house systems for associations and fund-raising

April 1980 to October 1985

Education

BS. Political Science, University of Massachusetts

Other

Member, Army-Navy CC; Public speaker; Volunteer --ANAD National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders

Pursuant to House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)

- The National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders (ANAD) has not received any Federal grants or contracts during this fiscal year or for either of the two previous fiscal years.